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## It all adds up in the Prairie Region

### A look at cumulative effects

It was 1999 in Alberta's Prairie Region. Work on a new Prairie Conservation Action Plan (released September 2001) was beginning. The plan identifies the need to assess the extent and implications of landscape change, and the need to promote awareness of associated issues amongst decision-makers and the public, as strategic priorities. Staff in the region were also aware of government's commitment to sustainable development and the anticipated roll-out of future Integrated Resource Management regional strategies. It all added up to the beginning of the Prairie Cumulative Effects Initiative.

"Our existing Ecosystem Management Framework shows how natural processes, and the natural disturbances associated with them, build and sustain stable ecosystems. With increasing human pressures on a finite landbase, we were ready for the next step. We also realized it was only a matter of time before we would need to develop a regional strategy and we needed a strategic tool to look at our landscape as a whole," said Ian Dyson, acting manager of Environmental Management for Alberta Environment's Southern Region.

"Cumulative effects assessment was being done as a requirement of environmental impact assessments, so there was some guidance available on determining the incremental impact of a specific development. Since cumulative effects clearly has application on the whole landscape, that's where we needed to devote some efforts, and that's where we thought ALCES - A Landscape Cumulative Effects Simulator developed by Brad Stelfox - could contribute," said Dyson.

"Though ALCES had been used on a pilot basis in the Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (ALPAC) Forest Management Agreement area, we were not clear how effectively ALCES would work in the Southern Alberta which has a complex, significantly transformed and fragmented landscape," remembers Dyson. "But we felt it had some potential as a tool to provide some rigour on the tradeoffs between competing uses of the landscape."

Brad Stelfox was the primary consultant responsible for programming ALCES and developing presentations. Ryan Johnson, Michael Martin, and Kathleen Sheppard were the three secondary consultants responsible for working with regional experts to assemble data for the model, collecting and processing images, and developing web-based presentations and speaking notes. A large Steering and Technical Committee was struck to steer the process, provide technical input, test assumptions, and ensure a balanced product. The committee included both government and non-government discipline experts.

The Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) Steering Committee, Alberta Environment and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development covered the consulting costs. Public members of the committee volunteered their time and government members attended courtesy of their organizations. Meetings were held to understand and program the model, identify key issues, develop, review and revise presentations.

**Continued on page 2**



## Cumulative Effects Assessment in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports

Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) is a requirement for the environmental impact assessment of projects in Alberta under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA)*. Some projects in Alberta are also subject to review under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, which also requires CEA. A guide to cumulative effects assessment is available on-line at <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/pr/otenf/assessment/cea.html> to assist proponents and other parties to understand the scope and practice of cumulative effects assessment.

## It all adds up, continued

For both the Grasslands Natural Region and the Oldman River Basin, ALCES has been programmed, including some threshold programming, and a PowerPoint Presentation has been completed. "Our next steps are wildlife modeling, airshed modeling, and finalizing thresholds. On February 5, 2002, a Prairie Conservation Forum working group will meet to begin the process of 'hands-on' work with the model," says Dyson. The Prairie Resource Information Unit, a branch of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, will maintain the Prairie ALCES models and the presentations. A small subset of the Steering and Technical Committee will meet once or twice a year to review information and help acquire updated material.

It's all added up. Dyson summarizes the project by saying, "The interest in cumulative effects has been growing, and the advent of ALCES has taken it a giant step forward. The work we've done on the Prairie Cumulative Effects Initiative has put us ahead of the game. We now have a tool that focuses attention strategically and encourages a sustainable longer-term approach to planning and decision-making. The models and presentations set the stage for reasoned dialogue about what we want the future to be." For more information on the Prairie Cumulative Effects Initiative, contact Ian Dyson by e-mail at [Ian.Dyson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Ian.Dyson@gov.ab.ca) or by phone at (403) 381-5430 (for toll-free long distance, dial 310-0000 and then the number). For more information on ALCES, check out the Forem Technologies web site: <http://www.foremtech.ca>. For more information on the Prairie Conservation Forum, check out the web site at: <http://www.albertapcf.ab.ca>.

## U of A Researchers Study IRM in Alberta's Boreal Forest

Two Master of Science students, an associate professor, and an assistant professor at the University of Alberta's Department of Rural Economy are evaluating opportunities and constraints for integrated resource management in Alberta's boreal forest. With a focus on the oil and gas industries and the forest industry, they are conducting research to help minimize conflicts between industry and other stakeholders in Alberta's boreal forest and to provide insight as to how cumulative impacts of development can be reduced.

The first phase of the research was a review of provincial natural resource policy focused on oil and gas and forestry. Reconnaissance interviews with key people in industry, government, and non-governmental organizations to understand their perspectives on the broad picture of IRM in Alberta, as well as the successes and challenges of four projects, will be completed in the spring of 2002. This will be followed by the development of a more refined semi-structured interview instrument during the summer.

According to Dr. Naomi T. Krogman, Associate Professor at the U of A's Department of Rural Economy, buy-in by the forestry and oil and gas industries is required for IRM to be successful in Alberta. Research completed to date also suggests established relationships of trust and respect between companies, which allow for the transfer of knowledge about each others' constraints and priorities, have a lot to do with success in IRM. For more information about this study, contact Dr. Naomi T. Krogman by e-mail at [naomi.krogman@ualberta.ca](mailto:naomi.krogman@ualberta.ca) or by phone at 780-492-4178, or Dr. Debbie Davidson by e-mail at [ddavidson@ualberta.ca](mailto:ddavidson@ualberta.ca) or by phone at 780-492-4598.



## In Memoriam: Edward Campbell Wyldman

Ed Wyldman, a former Director of Alberta Environment's Resource Planning Branch, passed away November 28, 2001 after a brave battle with pancreatic cancer.

Ed played a very significant role in developing the concept of integrated resource management in Alberta. He was a research forester with the Eastern Rockies Conservation Board in Calgary, the head of the Land Use Research Section of the Alberta Forest Service, and Executive Assistant to the Minister of Lands and Forests in the early 1970s. His distinguished career included 13 years of service as the Director of the Resource Planning Branch before his retirement at the end of January 1990.

Ed then spent 11 wonderful years with his beloved wife, Nina, traveling throughout North America and Hawaii, visiting with family and friends, and enjoying his favourite game – golf.

## Partnership creates interpretive wetland project in Calgary

A partnership between Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, BP Canada Energy Company, the City of Calgary, The Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery Volunteer Society, and Ducks Unlimited Canada has resulted in a model for proactively managing critical fish and wildlife habitat in a large urban centre. Volunteers built two bridges, shoveled 500 tonnes of dirt, spread 200 kg of native grass seed, placed 50 tonnes of river rock and planted 11,000 native wetland plants and shrubs to complete a cold-water stream, oxbow pond and a series of interpretive trails at the Pearce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland in Calgary.

The park's streams, ponds, bogs, grassy meadows and patches of balsam forest, along with interpretive signage, will showcase fish, plant, and wildlife species. Since the first phase of this project was completed in October 2001, conservation groups, and others who have visited the site have learned about their roles as stewards of Alberta's resources and how human actions influence the health of wetlands. A new pilot educational program called *Swamps, Bugs, and Cattails* was fully booked by Calgary and area schools during the fall of 2001, with 812 students from 31 classes at 16 area schools visiting the site.

This 14.6 hectare project is on track for completion in the spring of 2003. For more information, contact David DePape, Manager, Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, by e-mail at [david.depape@gov.ab.ca](mailto:david.depape@gov.ab.ca) or by phone at 403-297-6589 (for toll-free long-distance calls, dial 310-0000 and then the number).

## Hinton Government Centre models sustainable environmental design

The Hinton Government Centre acts as a bridge between hill and valley, industry and environment, past and future. It represents a healthy working environment for the Town of Hinton, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), Alberta Children's Services and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, that:

- reflects the vision of the community,
- responds to the site and the functional programme,
- is energy efficient and minimizes environmental impact,
- was designed with available skills and resources that reflect Hinton's economy, and
- leaves a positive legacy for future generations.

The centre was designed to meet CANMET – 2000 Advanced Commercial Building and NRCan Commercial Building Incentive objectives. Systems were designed to work together, and to reduce energy consumption to 50% of that of an equivalent building. Natural features of the site were conserved and the forest vegetation was retained to reduce heating and cooling needs. Construction and operational waste were minimized and materials stripped from the site were re-used. The design and orientation reduce heat, glare, and the impact of the west wind. Occupants' health, comfort and productivity needs are met with opening windows, extensive use of daylight, cooling from the water main, and computer controlled high efficiency zonal heating among many other features. If you are interested in learning more about this team effort or would like to tour the centre the next time you're in Hinton, contact Dwayne Breitreutz, Development Information Officer, by phone at 780-865-6008 or by e-mail at [dbreitreutz@town.hinton.ab.ca](mailto:dbreitreutz@town.hinton.ab.ca)



## Quotable Quote

*How then, might sustainable use work in the West? After identifying all economic, environmental, cultural, and abstract—call them spiritual—elements that need to be sustained, it seems to me inevitable that westerners increasingly will turn to various forms of planning. When I say planning, I mean it in the broadest sense: the process of a community coming together: identifying problems; setting goals—a vision—for a time period such as twenty or forty years; adopting a program to fulfill those goals; and modifying the program as conditions change. Some developers, imbued with the traditional carte blanche attitude so evident in the lords of yesterday, try to paint any form of planning as a straitjacket. But sensible yet visionary planning is the opposite: it can open our minds to the possibilities for our communities—our neighborhoods, schools, businesses, environment, and culture—so that we can build flexible arrangements for trying to achieve and sustain those possibilities. All across the West, stresses have built to the point where it is hard to imagine a sustainable future without some form of planning.*

*Charles F. Wilkinson,  
Crossing the Next  
Meridian: Land, Water,  
and the Future of the West*

## Carnivore Management Group works to conserve grizzly bear habitat

The Regional Carnivore Management Group (RCMG) was established to make recommendations on long-term planning objectives to conserve grizzly bear habitat in the 41,000 km<sup>2</sup> Alberta Yellowhead ecosystem. Since grizzly bear is considered an "indicator" species, their population and habitat status is viewed as an indicator of regional ecological integrity. Maintaining landscape level conditions favourable for grizzly bears should also meet the habitat requirements of a wide range of other wildlife species as well.

The RCMG works within the strategic framework called *Grizzly Bear Conservation in the Alberta Yellowhead Ecosystem*, which outlines the approach the Alberta government and Jasper National Park will use to conserve grizzly bear populations. The RCMG is made up of land and resource managers, including representatives of:

- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development,
- Jasper National Park,
- The forest industry,
- The mining industry, and
- The oil and gas industry.

For more information about the Regional Carnivore Management Group, contact Russ Stashko, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development in Edson, by e-mail at [russell.stashko@gov.ab.ca](mailto:russell.stashko@gov.ab.ca) or by phone at 780-723-8527 (for toll-free long distance, dial 310-0000, then the number).

## Shape the future of IRM Connections

When we launched this newsletter almost a year ago, we hoped to create a forum of discussion and information sharing about IRM and its contributions to sustainable development in Alberta. When we welcomed your ideas, we received 52 evaluations of the first issue and 27 evaluations of the second issue. They were generally positive and provided the editorial board with considerable information as the basis for continued improvement. Now, as we wrap up the fourth issue of IRM Connections, we're asking for your feedback so we can continue to meet your information needs. Please take a moment to complete the one-page evaluation (on-line at [http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/irm/irm\\_newsletters.html](http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/irm/irm_newsletters.html))

Do you know about:

- initiatives we should feature?
- experts or organizations who could be interviewed or asked to contribute content?
- upcoming events we could promote?
- resources we could publicize?
- others who are interested in IRM as a means to achieve sustainable development?

Contact the Editorial Board with your suggestions:

- by e-mail at: [irm.newsletter@gov.ab.ca](mailto:irm.newsletter@gov.ab.ca)
- or by phone at (780) 427-4857 (toll-free by dialing 310-0000 and then entering the number)

# Connections

## In this issue...

- Sustainable Development?
- The Land Use Report: Its Alignment
- Towards the Development of a Provincial Land Use Strategy for Alberta
- Consultations Continue to Shape HCS Strategy
- Contributing to the Future of IRM: Conversations

## What others say about IRM in Alberta

### A summary of three reviews

As we begin our second year of IRM Conferences, we thought it would be interesting to look at what others are saying about Integrated Resource Management (IRM) in Alberta. It is an IRM in Alberta is being a variety of roles, as evidenced by three recent regional reviews.

The first was commissioned by Alberta Environment and focused on regional strategy initiatives and was designed to assist the IRM Board in developing an effective regional strategy. The second was a review of the HCS Strategy, which was conducted by a multi-stakeholder group. And the third, produced by the University of Calgary, examined the Resource Law, policy, and regulatory framework and its impact on the IRM.

### Regional Strategies Initiative Review

The first review was commissioned by Alberta Environment and focused on regional strategy initiatives and was designed to assist the IRM Board in developing an effective regional strategy. The second was a review of the HCS Strategy, which was conducted by a multi-stakeholder group. And the third, produced by the University of Calgary, examined the Resource Law, policy, and regulatory framework and its impact on the IRM.

- Regional Strategies were seen as relevant to the IRM Board's mandate, as they were seen as a key element to the IRM Board's mandate.
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<https://archive.org/details/irmconnections14albe>



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[www.alui.ca](http://www.alui.ca)  
(Updated January 2008)

For more information about  
the Southern Alberta  
Regional Strategy, contact:  
Pat Kinney, Alberta  
Environment & Culture  
Ministry  
Phone: 403-297-2222  
or visit the ALUI Web  
site.

The Great Lakes-St Lawrence  
Basin is a transboundary

## Regional Strategies

### Northern East Slopes Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management Strategy update

The Regional Steering Group continues to meet regularly to complete their draft recommendations for the review of the update. Copies of their draft report will be available to support the review and consultation process, which is ongoing.

- Development of a committee designed to oversee report
- Public meetings to consult with citizens throughout the region, and
- Meetings with local stakeholder groups.

The Northern East Slopes Forum on Aboriginal Issues on November 26 and 27 at the Community Training Centre in Hinton. The purpose of the forum was to reconnect with communities and local levels of managers and understanding about Integrated Resource Management. The 51 participants included Elders and community from Suncor, Bow River, Grande Cache, Hinton, Alexander, Marlboro, Vale Range of Alberta/Zone IV, Kananaskis, Teton, Lake, O'Keefe and River Plant. Members of the Aboriginal Task Team and the Regional Steering Group also participated in the forum.

Representatives of the Regional Steering Group also met with elected officials in December to provide briefs with updates. On December 2, they briefed the West Central Mayor and Council, Canada, and on December 4, they met with the Ministry of Environment and MLAs from that region.

### Southern Alberta Regional Strategy update

The Southern Alberta Regional Steering Committee completed a key government consultation and stakeholder engagement program on Phase 1 of the Strategy since the last issue of the Connections.

Three new strategies or developments project were also initiated, along with a draft assessment and recommendations plan and framework. Under the Environmental Education & Outreach Program, and Alberta Partnership with the province's Environment Agency. The update report will provide a summary of the progress in each of the existing consultation programs, including the development of a strategic framework for ongoing relations, and setting out the future work and vision of the strategy.

#### Work in progress:

- Major development and data collection for example ALUI (A Land Use Consultation Strategy Initiative).
- 14 central initiatives, being prepared by the community involved in the Strategy, and
- A review of government policies and initiatives across the region to ensure that developments, to fully with the ongoing of the new and existing.